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Defense Officials Oppose Transfer Of Base Schools

Politics, Logistics Said To Weigh Against Shift

By Julie A. Miller

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon has informed Congressional leaders that it does not want to act on a controversial plan to transfer the responsibility for some 37,000 students who now attend schools on military bases to nearby public-school districts.

In a Dec. 30 letter to key lawmakers, Deputy Secretary of Defense William H. Taft 4th cited political and logistical problems that he said would preclude an "amicable transfer of our students at this time."

The Congress in 1986 had pressed the Defense Department to consider such a move as a means of achieving a savings in the military budget. It was unclear last week whether there will be any interest in the new Congress in forcing the issue over the department's opposition.

"While the specific circumstances for each location vary," the Defense official wrote, "I have concluded that the strong opposition of the local communities that would have to absorb our students, the grave concerns of our military parents that transfers would compromise the quality of their children's education, and the substantial economic, logistics, and personnel problems associated with transfers prevent the amicable transfer of our students at this time."

"The vast majority of these minor dependents are elementary-school children who are transient and constantly uprooted due

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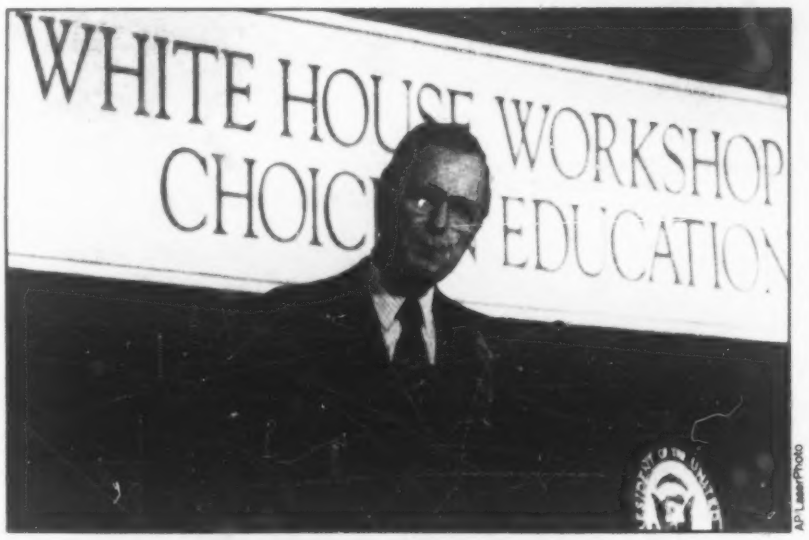
Parley on 'Choice,' Final Budget Mark Transition



AP/LaserPhoto

President-elect Bush and President Reagan addressed White House gathering last week.

Bush Pledges His Support For Choice, But Is Mum On Private-School Option

By William Snider

WASHINGTON—President-elect George Bush last week signaled that public-school choice would be a high priority in his Administration, saying that expanding parents' right to choose public schools is a "national imperative."

"I intend to provide every feasible assistance—financial and otherwise—to states and districts interested in further experiments with choice plans or other valuable reforms," Mr. Bush said in a speech that provided an early glimpse of the education-policy objectives of the new Administration.

His remarks were made before an unpar-

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Budget Projects Little Growth but Many Funding Shifts

By Julie A. Miller

WASHINGTON—President Reagan's 1990 budget proposal, his last, includes a $9.4-million increase for the Education Department.

In a $1.15-trillion budget plan, that is a tiny amount. But the fiscal blueprint released last week is only the third of Reagan's annual proposals not to propose an overall cut in education spending. The other two were released in the Presidential election years of 1984 and 1988.

The proposal looks good in comparison with previous Reagan budgets, said Susan Frost, executive director of the Committee for Education Funding. When inflation is taken into account, however, it represents "an actual cut of at least 4 percent," she stressed.

"If you look at it in terms of what you would expect of an education President, essentially freezing the budget at last year's level is not anybody's definition of investing further resources in education," she said, referring to President-elect George Bush's vow to be the "education President."

The 1990 budget proposes elimination of 25 education programs—almost all of them ones the Administration has previously sought without success to zero out—and shifts about $750 million of the resulting savings to other initiatives.

The programs slated for elimination include Star Schools, contributions to the Perkins Loan fund, dropout demonstration grants, workplace-literacy grants, and several small scholarship programs.

The Administration also repeated its proposal to eliminate impact-aid payments for "b" students, whose parents either live or

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2 Kentucky Districts Deemed 'Deficient,' Face State Takeover

By Reagan Walker

The Kentucky Board of Education last week invoked for the first time the full powers of a 1984 state law that was one of the first in the nation to allow state intervention in local districts deemed to be failing academically.

The Kentucky law, which came to be associated with the term "academic bankruptcy" although it does not use the words, permits state officials to intervene in the affairs of a school system following a finding that the system is "educationally deficient" on specific measures of performance.

The state board's action—affecting the Floyd County and Whitley County school districts—sets in motion an intensive yearlong review of the two districts' operations by an assigned team of state evaluators.

The state team has broad authority under the law to oversee, and modify if neces-

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In Wake of Soviet Earthquake, Experts Call For 'Seismically Resistant' Schools in U.S.

By Ellen Flax

When the earth began to tremble in Soviet Armenia last month, the schools could offer no protection.

Of the approximately 25,000 who died in the republic's devastating mid-day earthquake, a disproportionate number were children crushed by poorly constructed and unreinforced school buildings.

And U.S. experts say that though school officials here can take some comfort in the fact that their facilities are generally better constructed than those in Armenia, they should not assume—as many do—that a similar tragedy could not happen in their district.

Seismologists stress that damaging earthquakes could occur in virtually all parts of the country during the next several decades. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, more than 70 million people in 44 states are at some risk.

Yet, with the exception of California and a few communities in other states, the precautions being taken in terms of building requirements and personnel training is

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Also in the news

Lawmakers Rank Priorities
Accountability and the problems of children at risk will be high on state education agendas, a survey shows. **8**

Governors Offer Ideas
Statewide "choice" plans and taxes to fund reform are among the options backed in State of the State Messages. **9**

AP LaserPhoto

Transfer of Power

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